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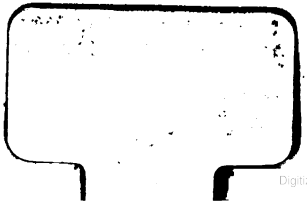
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From Nature to Christ.

FOUR LECTURES

DELIVERED TO EDUCATED HINDOOS

BY THE

REV. E. F. BROWN, M. A.,

OF

THE OXFORD MISSION.

Price 4 Annas.

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temptible—out of your admirations for this and that hero which have often led you up into fuller and better life, and have as often signally failed you in your hour of need—out of this, "the burden and the mystery of all this unintelligible world," does there not rise a strong cry for some *one* simple principle, eternally true, which may rule and reduce to order all this troubled scene—"O set my feet upon the rock and *order* my goings." Never cease to believe that there is such a principle, even though you have not found it yet. We are young, most of us; and youth is the time when within the human spirit the nobler feelings are eager and strong. But beware: it is even John Stuart Mill who says, "capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed not only by hostile influences but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position in life has devoted them are not favourable to keeping that higher capacity in excercise. Men lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them." Beware: ennobling thoughts depart as men grow older; they must be rooted to-day in the very passion of believing love, or to-morrow they will be dead. And then after to-morrow, old age will find us still wandering amongst the desert wastes of human ignorance and error, saying, Alas for the golden glow which shone upon them when I was younger, and made them seem to me like a garden of flowers.

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Religion.

A

LECTURE

TO

EDUCATED HINDOOS,

DELIVERED ON

SUNDAY, MARCH 20,

BY THE

Rev. E. F. BROWN, M. A.,

OF

THE OXFORD MISSION.

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The following is the third of a series of four lectures. The subject of the remaining one is Christianity, which will be published as soon as possible after its delivery.

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Theism.

"O that I knew where I might find Him!"

If you think of it, my friends, you will find that that aspiration of a reverent doubter of old exactly expresses the point at which we have now arrived in the course of these lectures. We came here to enquire about the truth, but we determined that we would conduct our enquiry under a deep sense of the obligation to obey it when found, else we should be almost certain to miss it. That was the subject of the first lecture. And in the second we asked of human experience to tell us whether that really exists of which we are in quest: and human experience made answer, Yes, there *is* Something which can satisfy all your own righteous longings after happiness, while It fulfils that most pure desire for the welfare of others which you also find within your breast: It can meet your sense of what is beautiful, It can slake your thirst for knowledge: It shall furnish you with a rule of life, as well as with the interpretation of that mysterious inner voice which you have been accustomed to call conscience: It shall do this for one, It shall do this for all. Moreover we saw reason to suppose that this supreme Truth could not be so much a thing as a Person, some One to love, as well as something to believe.

In one word, it is God. For what do we mean by God, if we do not mean at least this, supreme Truth united to supreme Love.

Dr. Martineau has said: "No ethical conceptions are possible at all except as floating shreds of detached thought, without a religious background ["religious" here used in its narrower sense, "of based on *divine* truth"]; and the sense of responsibility, the agony of shame, the inner reverence for justice first find their meaning and vindication in a supreme holiness that rules the world. Nor can anyone be penetrated with the distinction between right and wrong, without recognising it as valid for all free beings, and incapable of local or arbitrary change. His feeling insists on its permanent recognition and omni-

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present sway; and this unity in the moral law carries him to the unity of the Divine Legislator. Theism is thus the indispensable postulate of conscience, its objective counterpart and justification, without which its inspirations would be illusions, and its veracities themselves a lie."*

Thus the whole course of the argument of the last Lecture leads to nothing if it does not lead to this: there is One GOD.

So to night I pass on to the further question, Can we know Him? There is one GOD, we believe; but "O that I knew where I might find Him!"

1. The facts of life weigh heavily upon us. We look out into the world around us, and we do not find GOD recognised in the way that we should expect if He can really be known by man. As a matter of fact many men, perhaps the majority of men, are living "without GOD in the world;" they draw the laws and motives of their conduct, such as they are, from other sources. It may be that we hardly know a single one, who professes really to live by his belief in GOD. All this has a tendency to remove GOD far away from ourselves: to make us feel that He is practically unknowable, whether we could give a philosophic account of the feeling or not.

But ought we to allow this feeling to weigh with us? In science, the method by which the physical laws are established is commonly this: for a great many years a number of facts are patiently observed and recorded; some of them seem to be connected with one another, others not; at last it is seen that many of them converge in one direction; then comes a Kepler or a Newton, and makes a splendid guess, which at once gives the explanation of all these. Still there are others which remain outside, any one of which is enough to vitiate this guess or hypothesis, if it should prove to the last incapable of being brought under it; but from the position in which the hypothesis puts him, assuming it to be true, the scientific man has a far better chance of explaining these facts than he had before the hypothesis is made: and when he has so explained them, so that all the facts have a coherence and consistency which is in itself the greatest proof of the truth of his hypothesis, he justly refuses to discredit it again on the strength of some mere phenomena which it is perfectly able to account for. No scientific man gives up his belief that the earth is a globe,

* Studies of Christianity. Quoted in "Church Quarterly Review" Vol. 2.

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because an ignorant man tells him he can see with his own eyes that it is perfectly flat.

So, even in scientific matters, it is true, that:

> "Whose world is but the world of his own eyes,
> He is a slave, the meanest we can meet."

And no less true is it in the things of GOD. In religious matters more than in any others, we must gain the habit of suspecting our first crude impressions. We must make our search for principles, and only use the disconnected facts which we observe as the steps up to principles; and when we have found a principle which seems to be a true one, we must not reject it immediately we find some facts which do not at first appear to come within its range. We must get *within* it, grasp if we can its innermost meaning, and then see whether from that position facts are not capable of explanation which before resisted it.

Belief in GOD—belief that He can be to some extent known—is indeed a golden key for unlocking many of the riddles of this world. Whether it can unlock all of them remains to be seen. But granted for the present that it is only a Hypothesis, one of those splendid guesses which have at different times reduced to order the multiplicity of jarring facts, let us see what explanation it has to offer of the total forgetfulness of GOD by large numbers of men in the world.

It would be very difficult to pick out in modern times three names which have greater claims on the attention of thinking men than those of Bacon, Pascal, and Butler. They are all three men who by the mere force of intellect actually turned into a fresh direction the whole tide of thought in their time: like some great islands, which, meeting the Gulf Stream in mid-ocean, compel it to take a different course. They were eminent in different ways; Bacon, for the new start he gave to all the sciences—an impetus which they have never since lost. Pascal, scientifically great too, was yet greater for the resistance he made, in the teeth of an overwhelming weight of authority, to a false morality, which, with a few brief letters, he succeeded in hunting out of the field. Butler was great for the calm philosophic wisdom with which he took up a losing, as many thought a lost cause, and so utterly routed its opponents, that the same form of unbelief has never as a system raised its head again. Moreover, the weight of these men's words is not counteracted by any moral levity. There have been

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others, like Goethe, intellectually as great, who, when they have spoken on religious subjects, have not spoken with that sense of responsibility, which makes us feel that they at any rate are most solemnly impressed with the truth of what they utter. But Pascal and Butler were men of stainless, almost saintly lives: and if Bacon's character has been in one respect impugned, he has yet left much to show that when he spoke of GOD, he spoke of One Who was to himself a living reality. Now what does he say about Atheism: the passage in his Essays is no doubt well known to many of you:

"I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind. And therefore GOD never wrought miracle to convince Atheism, because His ordinary works convince it. It is true, that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth man's mind about to religion. For while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no further. But when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."

And he gives four causes which may account for the spread of Atheism in any age or nation, of which the last is well worth our notice, as going so thoroughly contrary to the idea that mere intellectual skill is a perfectly safe guide in Divine things: "And lastly. *Learned times* specially with peace and prosperity; for troubles and adversities do more bow men's minds to religion."*

I pass on to Pascal. He has dealt with the very problem which we were considering—the ignorance of GOD in which a great many live, and are content to live. He says:

"Let those who contend against religion learn at least what it is, before they contend against it. If this religion said it had a perfectly clear view of GOD, and could possess Him in His unveiled nature entirely revealed, it would be a fair contention to say that there is nothing in the world which shows Him with that amount of evidence. But, on the contrary, Religion says that men are in darkness and estrangement from GOD, that He is hidden from their knowledge, and the very name given to Him in the Scriptures is a *hidden* GOD. "Verily Thou art a GOD that hidest Thyself." It labours to establish these two truths as equally certain: one, that GOD has put in the Church marks

* Bacon's Essays. Of Atheism.

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sufficiently evident to make Himself recognised by those who seek Him sincerely; the other, that He has nevertheless disguised them in such a way that he will not be perceived by any except those who seek Him with all their heart." So that the very objection we are dealing with is evidence of the truth of the Church's testimony to God. And again:

"If God had wished to overcome the obstinate unbelief of the most hardened, He could have done so, by discovering Himself to them so plainly that they could not doubt the truth of His existence: and it is thus that He will appear at the last day, with such a burst of thunders, and such a catastrophe of nature, that the most blind will see Him. But it is not in this way that He has chosen to appear now in His gentler Advent. Because so many render themselves unworthy of His kindness, He has determined to leave them in deprivation of that good for which they do not care. It would not have been just for Him to come in a manner plainly divine, and calculated to convince every kind of men; nor would it have been just for Him to come in a manner so hidden that none could recognise Him, even those who searched for Him sincerely. He wished to make Himself perfectly knowable by these latter. Thus, willing to be known by those who seek Him with all their heart, and not by those who do not, He has tempered His revelation so that the marks which He has given of Himself shall be visible to those who seek Him, obscure to those who do not."*

If this be so, the wonder is not that so many are practically unbelievers, but that there are so many believers as there are: for how many can say they have sought Him with all their heart?

And lastly, Butler, in one of those quiet, forceful sentences for which he is noted, says of Christianity—and therefore all the more of Theism, which is involved in Christianity:

"There is I think strong evidence of its truth; but it is certain no one can, upon principles of reason, be satisfied of the contrary."

It appears then that all these great men thought it possible to explain the actual indifference to God without travelling outside the hypothesis that He exists and may be to some extent known. And in their hands I might be content to leave the matter; but I cannot forget that I am speaking to people whose deep *religiousness* is the

*Pascal. Pensees. Part 2.

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chief element in their national character. Now, a time of strong reaction has set in, and you are more inclined to think that all of what you once believed was false, than that any of it is true. But surely this is only some temporary Eclipse of Faith: surely you will come to see, it is far more reasonable to suppose that even in these false systems God 'left not Himself without a witness:' that amidst all that was unworthy of Him they did express the upward longing of your hearts for Him, which He Himself implanted in those hearts that it might be satisfied. "Thou O God hast made us for Thyself; and never can our hearts find rest, until they find it in Thee."

2. However it is not only this vague indifference—so easy to demolish in theory, though so difficult to meet in practice—that Theism has to encounter. It has also to encounter—not bare Atheism, that if it ever existed has gone out of fashion, but—strong and well-reasoned systems of Agnosticism. To say that we cannot know anything about God, is a leading principle of both those systems which I mentioned last time, Positive and Cosmic Religion; and from them it has filtered itself very largely into popular thought. As a rule they admit that Theism does supply all that is needed in the way of standard and motive for duty, and that in the highest and noblest form: but, they say, it is wanting in evidence. I think it was of George Eliot that I read the other day: she had no quarrel with Christianity, save that it was unverifiable. And here I must confess to my regret that I have to part company with this great authoress, whose large wisdom has helped me much, and whose works I have often had occasion to quote in the former lectures. George Eliot was a Positivist. She thought that for "human souls to seek wisdom apart from the human sympathies which are the very life and substance of our wisdom" was to grope idly in a "shadowy region:" that is to say, she did not admit the enlargement of vision which comes from prayer, and the moral effects of communion with God. She is one more example of the triumph of that temptation, which must always appeal most strongly to the largest minds, to think that all human needs must be measured by the extent of their own; and which compels us to repeat again and again: "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Now the Positive and Cosmic systems both assert—not that there is

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no God, that Herbert Spencer earnestly repudiates—but that He is unknowable. He or It is an unknowable power dwelling behind all phenomena. Therefore, says Positivism, you may ignore Him altogether: no, says the Cosmist, but treat Him as the great X or unknown quantity, which you must allow for in all your calculations, but never resolve.

Of the two, the latter is far the more philosophical; and it will suffice to try to-night briefly to deal with that.

(a) It was a Christian philosopher, Dr. Mansel, who in the interests of his faith gave the great impetus to the theory of the unknowableness of God which it has had in our day. But though it came from such a quarter, it was instantly repudiated by nearly all thoughtful Christians, for, cutting at the roots of Natural Religion, they saw that it must ultimately cut at the roots of all. Repudiated by them, it was taken up by others, and made the first principle of that system of which Mr. Spencer is the powerful and eloquent exponent.

God cannot be known by man—the Infinite cannot reveal Himself to the finite. Now I want you to notice first of all what a tremendous dogmatic statement is here laid down. At first sight it might seem a modest creed—very different from the brusque assertion of Atheism, There is no God—to say simply, we can know nothing about Him. But look how it falsifies the whole tradition of the human race. Look how it gives the lie not to one only, but to all the religions which have ever existed hitherto, which have always thought that they could know something about God—religions which amidst all their falsehood have in some way or other appealed to what is best and noblest in man, and which nearly all the best men have declared they found ennobling and strengthening. Dr. Arnold has said of the ancient pagan religions of Greece and Rome—and I suppose it is equally true of the religions of India—"Anything would be better than a national society formed for no higher than physical ends; to enable men to eat and drink and live luxuriously, acknowledging no power greater than its own, and by consequence no law higher than its own municipal enactments. Let a few generations pass over in such a state, and the missionary who should preach the worship of Ceres, or set up an oracle of Apollo, or teach the people to kindle the eternal fire of Vesta on the common altar

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hearth of their country, would be to that degraded society as life to the dead." So it seems to me the reverse of a real philosophic modesty of assertion, to sweep away at one immense swoop not merely all the creeds resting on the unseen which have ever existed, but also all which ever may exist: and moreover to declare that all those true human longings, which are themselves in some sort a pledge for their fulfilment—that cry which finds a response at some time in almost every heart, "My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God"—to declare that all these are utterly delusive.

(b) And secondly it seems to me to lower, if not to destroy the very conception of morality. This is a very grave charge, and is certainly one which the authors of the system would most earnestly deprecate. But let those who have read Mr. Spencer's 'Data of Ethics' say whether, if they felt driven to accept his system, their notions on all moral subjects would not be entirely changed, whether they would not be distinctly lowered. The justice which is a reflexion of the eternal justice of God is one thing, and the justice which is *merely* a means of procuring our own and other people's greatest happiness is another: to give up the first and take the second in its place we should undoubtedly feel to be a descent. And it is useless to say that men may still keep to their religions as the *immediate* motives of their actions, and thus preserve to the moral law its sacred sanctions; for how long will men keep their religions, if they are once convinced that all their ideas about God are symbols, which bear absolutely no relation to that for which they stand? Men, it has been said, die of many diseases; creeds only of one, that of being found out: and if once it is found out that all creeds are hopelessly false, they could not live longer than the time it takes them to die in. To all this Mill's answer to Mansel seems to me complete—I can only quote his words from memory, but they are something like this: "If there be a God who is called good, and yet is not what I mean by good, He may crush me, but I will not obey Him: and if He is able to send me to hell, to hell I will go."

(c) Still these two arguments are not conclusive. These results might fill us with despair, and yet if the principle on which they rest were true, we should be obliged to accept them. But now I declare that, having read Dr. Mansell's Bampton Lectures carefully through, I cannot see that all his arguments would not be perfectly satisfied

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by a less extreme conclusion than that to which he comes. He says, GOD is Infinite; therefore He cannot be known at all by the finite. GOD is Absolute: therefore He cannot be grasped at all by the conditioned. What is to prevent us from admitting the premises and yet saying, Though the Infinite and Absolute GOD cannot be *fully* grasped or known, yet he can reveal Himself in some true way to His own creatures. "The unknowable makes itself known in particular selected facts." Dr. Mansel and Mr. Spencer seem to be arguing against some one who says, GOD can be completely known by men: but that is not the true Theist's position. He only claims to know something of God, either from Nature, or from Conscience, or from some direct Revelation. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"—infinitely higher certainly, but not essentially different. In other spheres we do not say that the infinite can have no relation to the finite whatever. If there be an infinite number of things, we can yet take of them one or two or three. Though the parabola reach to infinity, we can yet cut off from it any portion which we require to work out a mathematical problem. Again, in other matters which are as a whole unknowable, we yet get true revelations of them in particular cases. For instance, the animal world. How absolutely unknowable it is for us: we have not the faculties for penetrating it. "Can anything be more marvellous or startling, unless we were used to it, than that we should have a race of beings about us whom we do but see, and as little know their state, or can describe their interests, or their destiny, as we can tell of the inhabitants of the sun and moon? It is indeed a very overpowering thought, when we get to fix our minds on it, that we familiarly use, I may say hold intercourse with, creatures who are as much strangers to us, as mysterious, as if they were the fabulous, unearthly beings, more powerful than man, and yet his slaves, which Eastern superstitions have invented . . . They have apparently passions, habits, and a certain accountableness, but all is mystery about them. We do not know whether they can sin or not, whether they are under punishment, whether they are to live after this life."* And yet, though all this be true, we do not think it necessary to cast a doubt upon such items of knowledge about the animals as we can occasionally reach. We reasonably conclude that our dog

* Cardinal Newman's Sermons. Vol. 4.

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is pleased when he wags his tail, though we admit that as a whole the moral and emotional nature of dogs is a sealed book to us.

And if it be so with creatures, so we may reverently say it is with the Creator. Though the nature of the Godhead cannot be completely known to us, yet we claim for God the power of making Himself known, as He pleases, in certain selected facts.

8. These few remarks, though I am concious how very inadequate they are, must suffice for the present as an answer to those who deny the very possibility of Theism. It will be perhaps of more service to try and draw out a little the position which the true Theist really occupies: and lest I should in doing so allow too much weight to my own Christian ideas, I shall be guided by one who is not a Christian (as I understand the term,) but is amongst the very foremost leaders of Theism in the present day, as well as one of the deepest thinkers. His name is no doubt well known to many of you, Dr. James Martineau.

(a) The first Revelation of God is in Creation. You are no doubt familiar with what are called the arguments from Causation and Design—I might refer you to a book where you will find them very fairly put by a fellow-countryman of your own, "Half Hours with Nature," by Mr. Shoshee Chunder Dutt. We find the flowers springing up year by year after the same unchanging pattern: we find the butterfly's wing painted unvaryingly year by year with the same delicate colours. One who gives a little steady thought to these things inevitably asks, Who has done this? As he penetrates deeper into the secrets of nature he discovers marvellous correspondences between the needs and operations of the various creatures. One furnishes exactly what the other requires for its sustenance. And so on, and so on. But now observe, all this is only a revelation to the Intellect: it leads us up to the *thought* of God, but it hardly does anything more. What does Dr. Martineau say about this revelation? "From the bare study of Nature, apart from the experiences of the human spirit which we carry to it, little I am persuaded could be learnt of God; and that little, so doubtful and so cold, so analogous to our knowledge of mere forces, so alien to the demand of our affections, that, though it might put the crown upon our science, it would be unworthy to tie the sandals of our Religion. . . . As revealed in the universe He remains a distant and aweful God, who utters no

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dear tones, but only says, I am no Fate; and we move across His immensity, not as on the meadow path that leads us to the sheltered home, but like the little boat upon the midnight sea, or the lonely traveller on the trackless Alp."*

(b) So we are driven to seek a closer, a more familiar revelation of GOD, and we find it in our conscience. When one of old cried out for the knowledge of GOD, we are told that he was commanded to go and stand upon a mountain: "and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." Yes, it is in the still small voice of conscience that we must seek that revelation of GOD which alone can make Him real to our hearts. We do not want Him as a mere philosophical conception, we want Him as a living and loving Person: and of such a Being our consciences tell us; very vaguely no doubt, and leaving much to be desired both for practical guidance and for theoretic completeness in our conception of Him, but still in such a way as to afford a basis on which to build all further knowledge of Him, as a moral Being in relation to ourselves. "The voice of duty," again says Dr. Martineau, "what is it if it be *not* the suggestion of GOD? Is it the mandate of your own fancy, imposed upon yourself—the mere imperative mood in the soliloquies of your own will? Not so; for were the law of your making, you might forgive its violation, and the thought that set it up might take it down; yet you feel its authority above your reach, and your boast of indifference to it a sad pretence. Is it a mere echo of men's opinion? A deference to their arbitrary demands? Not so; for how often does it lift you above that opinion, nerve your heart to withstand the injustice of a crowd, and to fight the good fight, though in the forlorn hope alone! As well might you persuade me that my own eyes created the daylight or that the sunshine was the gift of public opinion, as that the sense of right was anything but the direct illumination of GOD, the piercing ray of the great Orb of souls."

So it is that the true Light "lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

* Hours of Thought. Vol. 2. pp. 195—198.

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(c) Some think that these two revelations are enough to satisfy all human needs—I believe Mr Dutt in that book to which I referred does so. He does not deny the possibility of a still more direct revelation, but he says that is not required. Nature and our own hearts tell us enough about GOD for our own guidance. It is comparatively easy for *us* to think this, for we live surrounded by a public opinion which has been formed under the belief in another revelation, and which therefore can for the present to some extent take the place of it. As a matter of history it was an ideal human Character which has raised the standard of right and wrong amongst all European and many other nations to the point which it now occupies: as a matter of history it was the believed—if you like, the supposed—revelation of GOD which came by Christ which has supplemented, elevated, and fixed all our present ideas of GOD and Duty. Can we deny that revelation now? Can we do without it? Dr. Martineau does not think so; remember that I am quoting the words of a non-Christian writer.

"There are imperfections and indistinctness still left in the revelation which GOD embodies in our humanity. We need some expression of His moral unity, some single point in which to gather up the manifold glories of His will and character, a focus for blending into pure light the colours so parted and broken by the sad clouds and gleaming showers of this world's atmosphere . . . . . The Man of Sorrows is our personal examplar: the SON of GOD is our spiritual ideal; in whose harmonious and majestic soul, imperturbable in justice, tender in mercy, stainless in purity, and bending in protection over all guileless truth, an objective reflexion of the Divine holiness is given us, answering and interpreting the subjective revelation of the conscience."

Thus then the true Theist's position is this—and I think from what I have said you will see that he has ample justification for holding it—that GOD is in His essential Nature unknowable, but that He is capable of revealing Himself in one way or another so as to meet the universal human need for a Religion resting on the absolute Truth: "Ye shall *know* the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."

And again this conclusion, that GOD is partly unknowable and partly knowable,—unknowable for the completeness of a speculative system, but knowable as a regulative principle for human lives—is

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witnessed to by all those Scriptures which are stamped with whatever authority Christ possesses as a moral Teacher. There it is always laid down that "no man hath seen GOD at any time:" but St. Paul speaks of "that which is knowable of GOD"—*to gnoston tou Theou*. There, when one asks that he may see His glory, His incommunicable essence, the Divine Voice replies, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee." He will give a moral revelation of Himself. There GOD is represented as revealing Himself by successive stages of knowledge to His people: but when all are complete, it still has to be said "now we see through a glass darkly:" and for the full knowledge of Him we are always pointed on to some other state of existence, itself unknown, *because* it is impossible for us to have it in this: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

My friends, as I bring this lecture to a close, I cannot help being strongly reminded what a difference there is between that belief in GOD which is the mere conclusion of an argument, and that faith in Him which is a function of the soul. The one removes the difficulties which stand in the way of the other, but it does no more. One may almost say with Pascal that "only to know Him in this way, is not to know Him at all." To know that we *can* know Him is a dead knowledge, till it is vivified by the determination that we *will*. If there be a GOD, and if He can be in any degree known, is it not the irredeemable duty of each one individually to press on to know Him? There are times when changes sweep over nations; ancient Religions crumble away; faith grows cold; unbelief springs up with an ugly rampant growth. Thoughtful men look round and wonder whence the Restorer is to come; evil men rejoice at the desolation they see. At such times it is the highest virtue not to despair. When Hannibal, the sworn enemy of the Roman people, had crossed the great mountain barrier which guarded their land; when he had advanced into their territory; when he had gained one great victory after another, and a third that seemed decisive; when the defeated Roman generals had gathered together the scattered remnants of their army, and in shame and dismay retreated upon Rome; then did the true greatness come out of that mighty Roman nation which was destined to bear sway over the world, for then the senate and people came forth from their city to

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welcome those generals at the head of their miserable relics of an army, and thanked them that they had not despaired of the Roman people. Such a time has I believe come to us in Bengal; and here too amidst the general break-up of the old faiths there have been some who have maintained that religion is still possible: who have upheld the sacred sanctions of duty: who have waved high the banner of belief in the living GOD. I thank the leaders of the Brahmo Somaj, I thank the members of the Brahmo Somaj, for what they have done. They have fought for what must often have seemed a losing cause, they have held the citadel till relief could come. They have worked for the future, when other men could only live in the present. When some were shivering aghast at the fall of the old Temples, and others were madly dancing over the ruins, they have calmly and bravely collected what they could out of the wreck. While others were asking whether there was a GOD, they have been praying to Him. Yes, whatever may be the future of India, the Brahmo Somaj will deserve well of her. Oh may I say to you (if there be any of the Brahmo Somaj here tonight), let that burning love of truth which has borne you onward so far, bear you onward still. As you have covered the retreat, so may you be the leaders in the advance. May no natural fondness for the system you have made hold you back from building again the truths which are dear to you on a firmer footing. May your pure and passionate enthusiasm for the Right be the lamp which shall guide you into a truer Religion, resting on a foundation which the shifting tides of human thought may beat against, but never shake. Rouse yourselves for the high enterprise; it is yours. If for the present faith must be

> "A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,
> And build themselves again impregnably
> In a diviner clime,
> To Amphionic music, on same Cape sublime,
> Which frowns above the idle foam of Time."

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Christianity.

A

LECTURE

TO

EDUCATED HINDOOS,

DELIVERED ON

SUNDAY, APRIL 3,

BY THE

REV. E. F. BROWN, M. A.,

OF

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The following is the last of a series of four lectures, viz., Duty—Religion—Theism—and Christianity.

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Christianity.

If any of you should ever visit Florence, that artistic metropolis of the world, you will doubtless go to see a group of famous statues by Michael Angelo. Two of them represent Dawn and Twilight. Twilight is a man hardly past the vigour of life—his limbs left purposely unfinished by the Artist. A lethargy is stealing over his frame, a death-like slumber is upon his eyelids. He looks as though he could yet do mighty things, if he could once rouse himself for work and effort. But no—there is some fatal charm which prevents his doing that, the day-light slowly wastes—the light in which alone man can work—and fold on fold the night is coming on. Turn now to the figure of Dawn. She is a woman of earnest and thoughtful face, in the first glory of pure and radiant womanhood. The brightness of the morning is on her limbs; her eyes, from which she is just withdrawing the veil, are turned towards the source of light. In another moment she will be alive and awake and at work, spreading a beneficent power among men.

Such, my friends, are two historical aspects of Theism. In past times there has been the Theism which has turned its back upon the Christian revelation, and slowly but surely it has always sunk back into slumber and lethargy and death. And there has been the Theism which has struggled onward into the fuller light of Christ, and that has been a living power among men. For my witnesses I appeal to Judaism, Arianism and Mahometanism, the only Theisms which have been tried on any large scale. Can any of these at the present day, whatever they have been in times past, be called regenerating moral powers?

To the members of the Brahmo Somaj I said last Sunday a word of genuine thanks. Will they accept from me to-day a word of loving warning?

Now all Christians, I need hardly say, are Theists. They are

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believers in one GOD, and One only. The doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation guard and supplement this Unity; they do not contradict it.

Let me say a word about these two central truths of Christianity—these two doctrines which alone, when firmly held, make a Christian. I do not profess to explain them—GOD would be no GOD to me if I could perfectly penetrate His Nature. To do so I should have to be on a level with Him. But I will give you an illustration which may help you to see that, though these doctrines are above the grasp of human reason, they are not *unreasonable*. You yourselves are three persons in one: you are reason, heart, and will: you say, I think, I love, I will: and yet it is not your heart that thinks or your reason that wills. You must confess that, in some sense, you are one but you are three. Again there is another division to be made of your human nature, the division into soul—the spiritual part as a whole—and body, the material part. These are held together by one personality. And so, "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so GOD and man is One CHRIST." I give this, I say, but as an illustration; GOD'S Nature is not to be measured by man's. And yet, to one who accepts the Christian doctrine that man is made in the image of GOD, it is more than an illustration; though it does not amount to a proof. In any case, is it a shallower or a deeper conception of GOD, to say that He is less complex, less manifold and marvellous than man?

And now let me ask you to hold these thoughts in your minds, while I resume briefly the argument of the preceding lectures. I said if you remember at the beginning, that there were three conditions indispensable to the search after truth—the honest desire of obeying it, the belief that there is a truth to discover, and the conviction that we can discover it. I laid these down as assumptions, I did not undertake to prove them: nor do I think they can be proved. But the object of the former lectures was to show that each of them respectively answers to one of the deepest and most imperious needs of the human soul—the sense of Duty, the thirst for a Religion, and the belief in GOD; needs which wherever crushed are certain to assert themselves again; needs which are felt indeed in very different measure by different souls, but to which, wherever they are most strongly felt, those three primary conditions make their strongest appeal. Of these needs the most fundamental of all was

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the conception of duty, orm oral obligation, and by making this enquiry into truth we hoped to establish this on a firmer footing than that vague, instinctive, unsteady longing of our human nature.

Now remember I have not spoken and I do not speak to those in whom this conception of duty has been allowed to die. But I ask you, my brothers, who have trod with me along the steps of this argument under a solemn sense of your responsibility for the truth, whether we have not found a basis on which duty can securely rest, and be deepened, strengthened, and enlarged. We have seen that if we accept the principle of Theism—"Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind"—it includes all those other principles which by themselves could only make imperfect ethical systems: the love of man; the satisfaction of the intuitive moral sense; the reaching after a righteous happiness for ourselves. "Our nature in its perfect state is intended to be the balance of many great forces acting in mutual correspondence under an overruling power, like the movements of the great deep composed of its many tides and currents under the law of gravity: and these several forces in our nature are true when they are elicited by their respective attractions, and directed to their intended ends, under the will of GOD."

We wanted a sanction for duty. We have found it: but in the quest there has dawned on us the possibility of holiness, perfection, and union with GOD.

1. Perfection! Holiness! Union with God! The very words send a wholesome and a sobering shudder through my frame, recalling me back to facts. Perfection! O world of nature, art thou not stamped from top to bottom with imperfection—ruin, waste and decay? Holiness! O world of man, art thou not scored across and across with moral evil, earthly, sensual, devilish? Union with GOD! O my soul, I look within thee, and do I not see that which GOD, "Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," must loathe and abhor?

It is true. The whole of this natural world, the sphere of nature, the sphere of man, the hidden recess of my own heart, is signed and sealed—surely by some enemy's hand—with the mark of corruption.

(a) Look out into the world of nature. Is it not so? Could the Creator look down upon His work now, and say, Behold it is very good. Take into account that which scientific men call the waste of

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Nature, her much promise and little result: which St. Paul calls the subjecting of creation to vanity,—emptiness, failure and disappointment. There are the many stunted growths and wasted seeds, the leaves which fade before the autumn, the roots which have no glad renewal in the spring. There are the ravages of storms, the untameableness of animals, the immoderate rain which floods our meadows, the drought which follows upon cloudless skies. There are those terrible famines with which you in this country are unhappily familiar. There are those fearful hurricanes which lay low whole villages, and sweep away whole populations out to sea. So much is this the case that, though there is a revelation of GOD in Nature, yet those who look upon Nature alone might well ask—nay, it is no imaginary case, they do ask—whether Nature does not conceal GOD more than she reveals Him; she testifies to a great plan, but that plan seems more than half to fail—it is everywhere broken, frustrated and checked.

"Are GOD and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to GOD,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is LORD of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope."*

(b) Human life tells the same tale. Oh, we have not to go far to look for it. Here in Calcutta draw a circle of 100 yards radius round the Church in which we are gathered. How many sorrows will you embrace, how much disease, how much physical pain, how much mental anguish? How much brutality is being committed, how

* Tennyson: In Memoriam. LV.

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much selfish lust indulged, how much trampling on the rights of others, how much violent assertion of high-handed wrong? "What a thick hell of hatreds and hopes and fears." I am not speaking of Calcutta alone: it would be the same if we were in London. Human nature tells the same tale as Creation does, and that tale is, that somehow or other, "the world is out of joint."

(c) And now let us look into our own hearts a moment. Is there nothing there to correspond to all this? In the world we see the ghastly effects of sin: in ourselves we see the sin itself. These proud thoughts, these covetous desires, these sensual imaginations, what are they but the root evil of all? Do not these justify, as it were, the imperfection of the outer world, for they tell us that if there were a perfect world, we should not be fit to live in it. Do they not justify our present state of banishment from the holy GOD? For they tell us that if we could come near Him, He must shrink from us in loathing, and we must tremble from His presence? Do they not justify all the evils that may happen to us—sorrow and pain, sickness, disease, and death. Death! what is death? Bodily death is but the shadow of which this gigantic central evil is the substance. Moral evil—or, as in the light of GOD's holiness we have learnt to call it, Sin—*is* death. For a right view of any religion, every thing depends upon how deep our view of this moral evil is. "A mere superficial view is followed by a religion of the merest sham, or a fairly contented worldliness: a deep and serious sense of sin by an earnest, an ennobling struggle." Let us strengthen our own feeble sense of it by the plain words of the old prophets, who at any rate were true observers of human nature. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and woefully sick."* "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores." "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me."

Let me sum up this portion of the argument in the weighty words of Dr. Newman:

"To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of men, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments,

* Jeremiah XVII. 9. 'Desperately wicked' is a mistake of translation and an exaggeration of fact.

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forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things as if from unreasoning elements not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, "having no hope and without God in the world"—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery which is absolutely beyond human solution.

"What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from His presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the tokens on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birth-place or his family connexions, I should conclude that there was some mystery connected with his history, and that he was one of whom, from one cause or other, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and condition of his being. And so I argue about the world. *If* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes almost as certain to me as that the world exists, and as the existence of God."*

So I say that human corruption is a great massive fact; and you must have *some* Theory for getting rid of it. This is a previous question for all the moral systems we have had occasion to touch upon in former Lectures. They assume that man will do right when once right is clearly set before him: we know that he will not. We know that very often he prefers the evil, or that, without preferring the evil, he has not

* Cardinal Newman's Apologia. Part vii.

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strength to follow the good. "To will is present with me, but how to to perform that which is good I find not. . . . Who shall deliver me from the body of this *death*?"

2. You must have some way of meeting this radical evil. Two ways have been tried, and into one or other of these every theory of human life which has ever been proposed ultimately resolves itself. The first is what I shall call the Way of Nature.

(a) It takes different forms. In some, it simply amounts to letting all human impulses have their own way. This is what most men do in great measure, but seldom with such consistency that its results can be fairly seen. They pay some deference to public opinion, some respect to religion, and something they do occasionally sacrifice to the welfare of those who have claims upon them. But it happens that we have an instance of one who did avowedly throw off all these restraints: and so far as he had any theory of life at all, it was that of letting nature have entirely her own way. His natural character was a fine one; his gifts were extraordinary; his social advantages were great; and at first it seemed as though the experiment would be a successful one. But though he died at 37, he has left us a little poem in which he lets us into the secret of how the results had worked themselves out even at that early age: and in the whole range of literature I do not know any darker picture of utter and irredeemable despair. As the poem is a short one I will quote it:

"There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay:
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret wreathe,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and gray beneath.

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O could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept o'er many a vanished scene,—
As streams in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though they be,
So midst the withered waste of life, those tears would flow to me."

The author of this poem, as you will no doubt recognise, is Lord Byron. What better witness could we have that the state of nature is a state of death?

(b) There is another form which the Way of Nature takes. It expands itself into a regular Theory. It observes that alongside with all that mass of human corruption there are other facts: traces of good, generous impulses, upward longings. On the strength of these it assumes that human nature is good at bottom, and that all our evils spring from our travelling away from the state of nature; to be perfect, we have only to get back to it. In France, in the eighteenth century, this theory had a fair trial. It was worked out by Rousseau—Rousseau with "his astonishing gifts, his powers of imagination, his strong affectionateness." He planned a system of education by which a child from his birth upwards should be kept from what he thought the corrupting influences of civilization, and the still more corrupting influences of religion. His theory was taken up warmly, enthusiastically, by the men of his day—and what did it produce? It produced the French Revolution. It produced the Reign of Terror.

It did so because it ignored facts. It declared that evil existed only outside of man, and not within him. Therefore it became a duty for him to sweep it away by whatever means he could: all means were just for that end. Alas! it was a sad and sickening parody of the truth of man's redemption from evil. But the error still lives, and all who believe in the ultimate perfectibility of man as man on this earth, are doing their best to keep it alive.

The poet Shelley was an ardent disciple of Rousseau. In the beginning of his life he made a resolve:

"I will be wise,
And just and free and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach or check."

To that aspiration, as an aspiration, he was on the whole faithful. He kept that vision of moral beauty before him, but he never drew one step nearer to it than he was in that hour of his boyhood, when he

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made the resolution. The whole of his short life was one series of the most ghastly moral failures. His was a far nobler character than Byron's, but, like Byron, he fell. And like Byron, he has summed up the results to himself in a little poem.

"O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more.

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight:
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more."

Truly the state of nature is a state of death.

(c) And thirdly, I must touch briefly those attempts which have been made by religious systems, ancient or modern, to eradicate the evil of man's nature. They were made on the basis of Natural Religion, by which I mean that knowledge of GOD which comes through nature or conscience alone, or possibly from some relic of the primitive revelation. Now these were the expression of the true instinct that if redemption were to come to the human race at all it must come from GOD, and not from itself; and I do not doubt that those who made the most of these systems did receive from GOD the satisfaction of their hopes: "in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted by Him." But what I want you to see is, that though particular individuals might through them reach to GOD, they did not as systems arise from an origin above nature. They did not deal with the evil at its source: they taught man to cry out of his nature unto GOD, they did not teach him how his nature itself might be renewed, they could not. They accomplished much. They did "many a knot unravel by the way, but not the master knot of human fate." The best that they accomplished was to make those who used them to the utmost feel their unsatisfactoriness, feel that there must be some other solution, some more drastic remedy for the disease in which men were involved; and as they felt it, their faith leapt forward to believe it. It is the same tone of sadness for the present, but hopefulness for the future, which

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runs through them all: whether it were the Greek who turned aside from all his gaiety and delight in life to say: "The best thing for a man is not to have been born, and if he cannot avoid that, then to die as soon as possible"—or whether it were the patriarch of old who cried out of his affliction: "And I, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that, the last, He shall arise upon the dust." Why did he know it? Because he felt that nature, within him and without him, was strong and evil, and nothing but a fresh creation could restore it.

So I say that all the religions of the world, so far as they are true, have made us feel that our restoration must come from GOD, and have taught us to seek it from Him, and to expect it as the reward and crown of our own efforts to reach Him. Not one of them has ventured to say, "Lo, it has come. The tabernacle of GOD is with men. The kingdom of heaven is among you." They have taught us to long for this, but they have confessed that they themselves were unable to give it. They could not rise above their source. They were *natural* religions, and they sank back again to nature. And the state of nature is the state of Death.

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man."

3. And now will you listen to me patiently while I tell you what the other way is; not the way of Nature, but the way of Grace?

"A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him of his raiment and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half-dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him; and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed he took out two pieces of money, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more when I come again I will repay thee."*

Such, my dear friends, is the grace and truth which came by JESUS

* Gospel of St. Luke. Ch. X. 30-35.

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CHRIST. He said that there was an original creation in holiness; your hearts did not deceive you when they told you that. But that fair creation has been desolated by a spiritual enemy who first tempted man to sin, and thereby introduced evil, moral and physical together, into the world. Since then, men have not been born in holiness, nor are they able of themselves to reach it; any more than the tree once allowed to degenerate and grow wild, can bring forth again the same good fruit which once it did. And yet that fair first life is not quite extinct: our nature is indeed "woefully sick," and left to itself must soon perish: but as yet there is hope of restoration. That restoration other religions could not give, not even the purest Theism of the world. It could only look, and pass by on the other side. But One has come from GOD to restore it, by giving us of His own—even JESUS CHRIST, Who is ready to impart to you a new nature and a new strength in the place of your own. He indeed in His visible presence has departed for a little season, but He will come again. And in the meanwhile He entrusts us to His Church, and the ministers of His Church shall complete our restoration. Ere long He will come again.

This then was the meaning of the coming of JESUS CHRIST. We have seen that He has strengthened the obligation of Duty, harmonised and completed all our views of Religion, defined and perfected our knowledge of GOD. But not any or all of these was the main object of His coming. "I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Life! We have seen what Death was. We have seen that that, which we are accustomed to call death is but the visible sign and evidence of the deeper death which exists already within the soul. And so Life is the new power and inner principle to be given us for doing away with that death, and rising up to holiness, and perfection, and union with GOD.

Now with regard to the theory of life which is offered you here, I remark first of all that it is a practical theory. It faces the facts. It does not try to ignore them or explain them away. To the unspoiled soul it comes as a luminous interpretation of that perplexing thing, himself. There is no denial of the reality of evil; no saying that it is but good in the germ, which our hearts as we utter it feel to be a pitiful untruth. Nor again is there any ignoring of the good in human nature. It says that it is *half*-dead, and itself of tending

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to death: the *principle* of moral good is extinct: but if it said it were wholly evil it would ignore the facts—for we do see much real good even among men who are leading merely natural lives—as well as cut away the basis for restoration.

Secondly, it does not profess wholly to explain the facts. It does not tell you whence evil comes. That is a problem which it will not deal with, and which no other theory has ever been able to deal with. "Against this immovable barrier of the existence of evil, the waves of philosophy have dashed themselves unceasingly since the birth-day of human thought, and have retired broken and powerless, without displacing the minutest fragment of the stubborn rock, without softening one feature of its dark and rugged surface."* But at any rate there is no false Manichæanism about this theory—that sad and helpless philosophy which sets up good and evil as two co-ordinate powers, of which neither can overcome the other. No, it tells us that GOD is good, and that evil exists only by His permission, for our probation: and thus it leaves a sphere for faith, for humility and patient but hopeful effort.

And thirdly, while it thus satisfies that conception of GOD which we gained last time as a Being partly knowable and partly unknowable, it gives us knowledge amply sufficient to live and work by; and for us, as moral beings, that is enough. "Action, and not knowledge, is man's destiny and duty in this life; and his highest principles, both in philosophy and in religion, have reference to this end."†

Now I ask you, does not this way of practically dealing with the deep problems of your life appeal— if not yet entirely to your minds, yet to your hearts. Argument may lead you to the threshold of it; but really to grasp it, to enter in, you must have childlike hearts: hearts rendered childlike by a deep sense of need, of the aweful reality of sin and the loving purpose of GOD. Trust these feelings. They are true. Let them work within you, till they compel you too to cry out: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then shall the answer come ringing back: "I thank GOD, through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."

"O great, good GOD? O strong, O heavy sin,
Turning the pleasant days to bitter ruth!

* Dr. Mansel's Bampton Lectures: VII. † Ib. V.

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Ne'er may your powers, our life encompassing,
Provoke the Cynic's question, what is Truth?

Ne'er may our hearts, so vacant, drear and dull,
Deem their dead selves an Image of the Above,
Till they have tried the Gate called Beautiful,
Unlocking with the golden key of love.

Then shall the burnished portals, swinging wide,
Reveal an all undreamt Similitude,—
A death-pale Form, torn Hands and pierced Side,
A Cross, a Scourge, wan lips and streaming Blood.

Where is the sorrow for a world undone?
Where is the evil suffered, not denied?
Where is the Love?—O Dear, O Blessed One,
'Tis in those Hands, those Feet, that wounded Side."

Many objections will no doubt rise to your minds. At other times, and in other places, we will try and meet them. But now I ask you to look at the Christian Religion as a whole. Ask yourselves, to whom shall we go, if we reject it? It offers you moral Freedom: more than this, it offers you holiness, perfection, union with GOD. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." None but Christ has ever claimed to do this. None but He has even grasped the conditions of the problem. Through Him we see that to gain this Freedom human nature needed a new creation, and who could give that but the great first Creator. Therefore it was that the Creator of the world was born in the world, became Man amongst men—not *a* man, but *the* representative man as the first Man had been—in order that by taking our human nature upon Himself He might lift it up into His divine nature, and by so doing give to each one of us who is united to Him the *power* of a new life. This is why the Faith of Christ is as much a living force among men to-day as it was eighteen centuries ago—wherever it is heartily embraced. It has stood, not in a corner of the world where the light of other truths has never penetrated, but amongst all the progressive nations of the world, helping on their progress, yet ever unflinchingly warning them against their moral dangers. It has stood, and it still stands; nay it is moving forward in every quarter of the world. From the north and from the south, from Africa and from America, from Australia and from the southern isles, there is a cry like the cry of those Gree'

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of old who, wearied out with their philosophies and their paganisms and their moral systems, came to Jerusalem with the utterance of a deep, still, unsatisfied longing, Sirs, we would see JESUS. India still sleeps; but she too is moving uneasily in her slumber, and her dreams are beginning to vanish before the breath of the morning. O, awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and CHRIST shall give thee light.

Why is all this? Why has the Christian Church such power? Because it meets the needs of earnest souls. It meets above all that vital need, of a Redeemer from spiritual death and a Restorer of spiritual life. It meets it in a tender, human way: in a way that men, be they poor or rich, ignorant or learned, can feel and understand. Oh my brothers, we offer you no mere book-religion, we preach to you no dead CHRIST, but we bring you a living CHRIST in a living Church. We offer you the privilege of admission to that Body through which He is doing His work on earth. The kingdom of GOD, the Church of CHRIST, is come upon you. She is a Being of two worlds. She does not despise your mortal weakness; for she holds out the warm hands of flesh and blood, and says, Look at me, touch me, nestle into my bosom. I am real, I am no phantom to elude your grasp. I do not offer you mere abstract propositions. I have a parentage in history, and a visible organization, and a definite teaching about the Truth, and outward visible signs and pledges which touch and satisfy your humanity. You shall find me a loving Mother, sensitively alive to your faintest and weakest human longings, while I cast around you the Everlasting Arms: for though I am human, like my Master I am Divine too, as you shall find if you will trust yourself to me. I will bear you upward on eagle's wings. There is strength for you instead of weakness, there is light for you instead of darkness, there is life for you instead of death. O come. Heaven lies open before you, and Angels are leaning from their thrones, the Holy Spirit is moving within you, and CHRIST is offering His prevailing sacrifice, and the Eternal Father is waiting to receive His long-loved sons.

My friends, I would count it a sin to speak one word to you, which I did not think was literally and soberly true. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him. But GOD hath

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revealed them unto us by His SPIRIT." We know that this witness is true. It rests on a surer word than ours, but if you like we can give you ours too. To night I will confess to you, I have not always been practically a Christian. In other ways—in many such as we have spoken of together—I sought rest for my soul. I did not find it. In the Church of CHRIST, in the fulness of her truth, I found it and am finding it. Will you not join yourselves to our company? Believe me, you will not regret it. We know Whom we have believed. He is not now to us the conclusion of an argument, but the power of a new life. We cannot offer you full satisfaction for all your intellectual difficulties; but if your end is not knowledge but practice, we can offer you light sufficient to live by and to die by. Some things which are dark to you are still dark to us: other things we can explain. We can offer you brightening light and kindling love. We know Whom we have believed. Other systems it may be pretend that they can give you some of the things which are offered you in the Church of CHRIST: truth, freedom, union with GOD. They make a false pretence. They will attract you for the time, but in the hour of need they will fail you. In the hour of need we must have realities, we must have facts. We know Whom we have believed. We have not left our homes for an unreality. Are those systems such as you would dare to commit yourselves to for life and death? Have *they* stood for 18 centuries, not against the puny stream of a narrow tradition, but against the ever-restless advancing tide of a world-wide culture? We know WHOM we have believed. He is our Master, He is our Friend. Will you not come to us to learn more of Him? Will you not visit us in our home, will you not let us visit you in yours. We will do all that we can for you. We are your servants for JESUS' sake. The love of CHRIST constraineth us.

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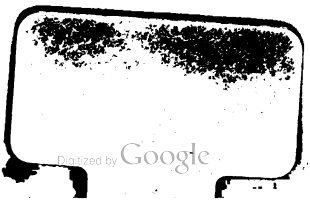
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